



# NEWS RELEASE

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## ***South Central Kansas Economic Development District, Inc. Approved for USDA Rural Development Funding*** ***Financial assistance provided for home repairs in Rice County***

**Rice County, KS** – USDA Rural Development State Director Chuck Banks was joined by representatives from the Kansas Weatherization Assistance Program (KWAP), Rice County Commissioners, Rice County Economic Development, and the Habitat for Humanity of Rice County in presenting South Central Kansas Economic District, Inc. (SCKEDD) a ceremonial check of \$37,735.02 to provide financial assistance for the repair and rehabilitation of 10 owner occupied homes in the rural communities of Rice County. Funding is provided through the Agency's *Housing Preservation Grant Program (HPG)*.

State Director Chuck Banks, in comments at the presentation ceremony remarked, "The availability of affordable housing in our rural areas continues to be a major factor which contributes to the economic development of Kansas. These grant funds will be used to reduce the cost of repair and rehabilitation, correct health and safety hazards, improve accessibility for persons with a disability and make repairs to improve the general living conditions of the residents who would not otherwise be able to make the needed repairs to their homes."

David O'Dell, President of SCKEDD said, "Each year SCKEDD develops a Program of Work that sets forth all the major goals our organization strives toward to assist with economic development in our 14 county service area. The USDA Housing Preservation Grant for Rice County is one part of our overall strategy to preserve and improve rural housing."

Michael West, Weatherization Director for SCKEDD remarked to the attendees, "USDA's HPG program will allow SCKEDD to perform a major repair on a house and then proceed with weatherization. Since weatherization can't pay for a new roof, once that work is done, the homeowner can benefit from insulation and furnace repair or replacement. The two programs are a good fit." The Kansas Weatherization Assistance Program will provide \$32,150.00 of grant funds to be combined with the USDA Rural Development funds.

During Fiscal Year 2004, the Agency awarded a \$46,000 *HPG* grant to SCKEDD to provide assistance for 12 households in McPherson County that was combined with weatherization and a HOME grant. USDA *HPG* funds made it possible to leverage an additional \$162,000 from those two programs. USDA Rural Development's *Housing Preservation Grant Program* has provided over \$3 million in grant funding to Kansas to enhance the quality of life by increasing accessibility and usefulness of rural homes.

USDA Rural Development's mission is to deliver programs that support increasing economic opportunity and improving the quality of life of the State's rural residents. The Agency provides equity and technical assistance to finance and foster growth in homeownership, business development, and critical community and technology infrastructure in rural America. During Fiscal Year 2006, USDA Rural Development provided over \$231 million in direct funding for community and economic development projects across rural Kansas. Individuals who have an interest in learning more about USDA Rural Development programs may contact the Agency's office in Topeka at 785-271-2700, or may log onto the state's Agency website at: [www.rurdev.usda.gov/ks](http://www.rurdev.usda.gov/ks)

***USDA Rural Development – Committed to the future of rural communities.***

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